



To: Interested parties

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Re: Messaging Research in Key Races

The Working Families Party is a leading political organization whose endorsement is sought by thousands of candidates across the country every cycle, and has earned a reputation for effective electoral organizing. In 2022, WFP-endorsed candidates won eight competitive Democratic primaries for Congress, often against much better funded rivals.

This fall, the GOP has attempted to turn the WFP's endorsement of Democratic candidates in competitive districts into a liability, using the WFP endorsement to try to paint candidates as dangerous radicals, out of step with the mainstream, and supporters of defunding the police.

As an organization that wants its endorsed candidates to win, WFP commissioned a poll from the Justice Research Group to rigorously investigate voters' knowledge and perceptions about WFP, and to learn whether the GOP's efforts to make WFP into a liability have any impact. We surveyed more than 3,000 respondents in five battleground districts: Oregon's 5th Congressional district, Connecticut's 5th Congressional district, and the U.S. Senate races in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Georgia.

The poll excluded the most committed Republican voters¹ in order to focus on detecting impacts among committed Democrats and potential swing voters.² We use the voter's initial, pre-messaging vote choice as a benchmark for comparing movement throughout the poll.

Our research found the following:

1) Inclusion of the WFP endorsement in a positive biography of a candidate does not change the positive impact of that bio.

In all five races, we provided bios for both Republican and Democratic candidates, with a split-test for the Democratic biographies: half including the WFP endorsement and half not mentioning it. In each race, fair bios for both candidates added to the Democratic advantage among swing voters. In aggregate, we found no statistically significant difference between the bios that do and do not name

¹ Defined as voters who self-identify as "strong Republicans," who say they always vote for Republicans and never consider voting for Democrats, or who say that they are definitely planning to vote for the Republican candidate in 2022.

² Including voters who say they usually, but not always, vote for Republicans.

the WFP endorsement. In each race, the difference, among the whole sample and among swing voters, was within the margin of error.

Ballot Test: Initial vs. Post Bio Test

Initial Ballot vs. Post-Bios	Post - Definitely Democrat	Post - Probably Democrat	Post - Undecided	Post - Probably Republican	Post - Definitely Republican
Pre - Definitely Democrat: without WFP	95%	4%	0%	1%	0%
Pre - Definitely Democrat: with WFP	95%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Pre - Probably Democrat: without WFP	21%	68%	3%	1%	7%
Pre - Probably Democrat: with WFP	22%	68%	2%	4%	4%
Pre - Undecided: without WFP	6%	22%	51%	3%	19%
Pre - Undecided: with WFP	5%	24%	50%	2%	18%
Pre - Probably Republican: without WFP	5%	9%	3%	21%	63%
Pre - Probably Republican: with WFP	1%	12%	8%	22%	57%

Source: WFP Poll of 3,147 Democratic and Swing Voters
Table: October 7-12, 2022

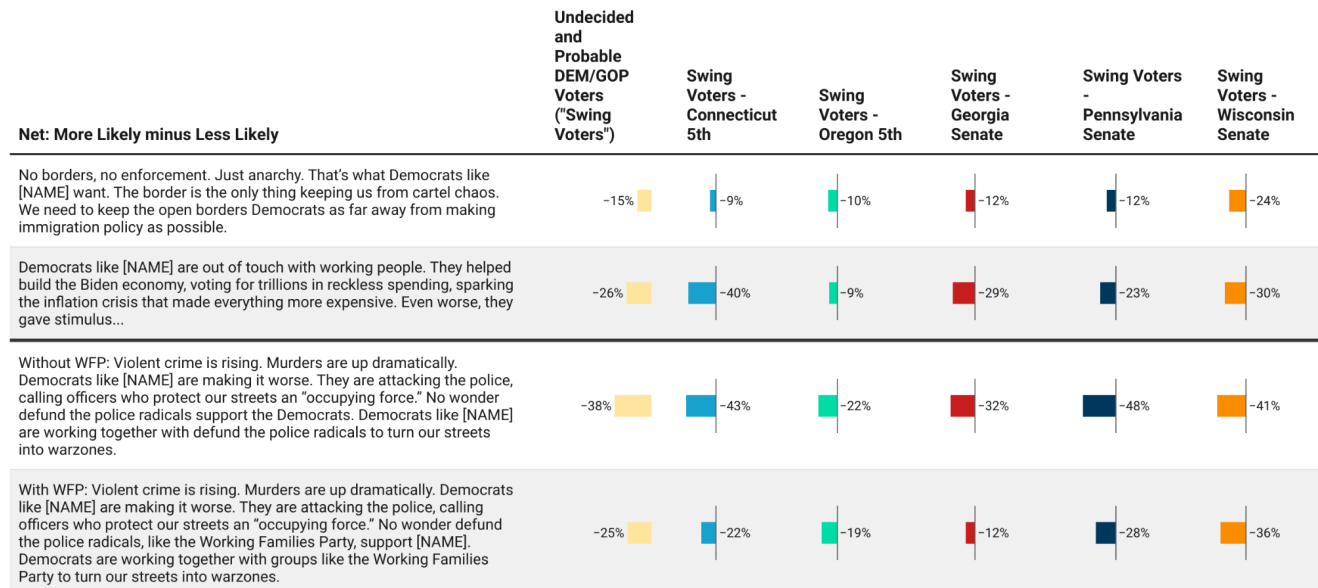
2) While immigration, inflation, and ‘defund’ attacks do take a toll on Democratic support, the use of WFP’s endorsement as a proof-point to characterize Democrats as pro-defund actually reduces the severity of that Republican line of attack.

We tested three common attacks Republicans have used against Democratic candidates this cycle: an inflation/cost of living message, an immigration/border security message, and a defund/public safety message. We split-tested two versions of the “defund” message: one naming the candidates’s endorsement from “defund the police radicals like the Working Families Party;” while the other did not name WFP.

It is no surprise that these attacks against Democrats do reduce support for them – that’s the reason they’re being wielded so frequently by Republicans and GOP Super PACs this cycle, regardless of the Democratic candidate’s actual position on policing.

However, a striking finding is that the attacks that tie the Democrat to “defund” through the WFP’s endorsement were markedly less potent. In response to the non-WFP version of the defund attack, across all races, plausible swing universe (probably D, undecided, and probable R in the initial ballot test) were less likely to vote for the Democratic candidate by a net of 38% (20% more likely and 58% less likely). The version that named the WFP saw a significantly *smaller* 25% point margin (26% more likely compared to 50% less likely). In two of the races we tested, the difference between the two versions was relatively small (3% in OR-5 and 5% in WI); in the other three it was 20 or 21 points (CT-5, GA, and PA).

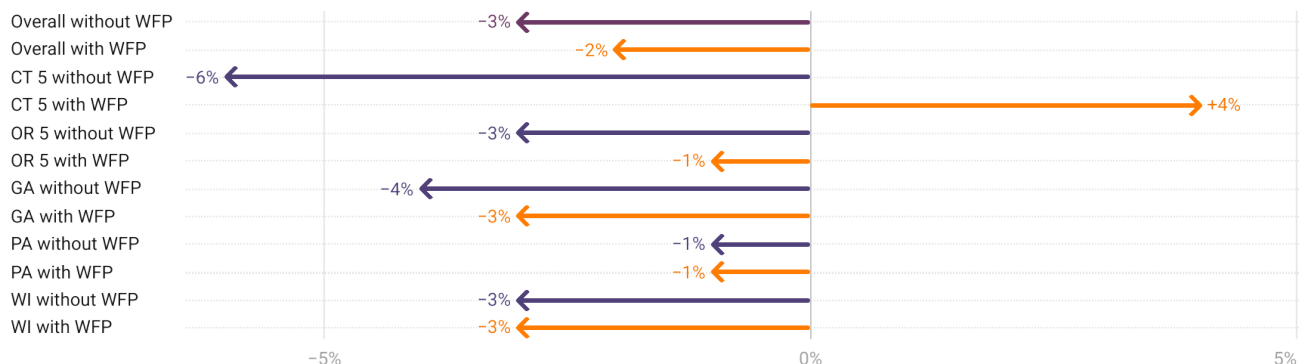
Below is a statement about [NAME OF DEMOCRATIC HOUSE/SENATE CANDIDATE]. After reading the statement, Please indicate the statement makes you more or less likely to vote for [NAME OF DEMOCRATIC HOUSE/SENATE CANDIDATE], or if it makes no difference?



Source: WFP Poll of 1,240 Swing Voters
Table: October 7-12, 2022

That result also held up in head-to-head tests following the attack battery: voters who saw the "defund" message including WFP showed less movement away from the Democratic candidates.

Ballot Test - Initial and Post Defund Attack



Source: WFP Poll of 3,147 Democratic and Swing Voters
Chart: October 7-12, 2022

3) The WFP brand is associated with standing with the working and middle class – not radicalism – and most self-identified moderates see WFP as moderate too.

The WFP calls itself "the party for the multiracial working class, fighting for a nation that cares for all of us" – and though the GOP has sought to characterize the WFP as dangerously radical in these districts, those attacks do not appear to be landing.

Familiarity with WFP varies somewhat across the districts, from CT-5, where nearly two-thirds of voters say they know “a lot” or “a little” about WFP, to a low in Pennsylvania where only a quarter of voters said that.

However across all geographies and types of voters, perceptions of what WFP stands for are similar. We offered voters a dozen possible attributes to describe WFP, including “woke,” “socialist” and “radical.” The most common three responses across all geographies about what describes the WFP were, in order: “Fights for the working class,” “For the middle class” and “Common sense.”

To the best of your knowledge, how well, if at all, do each of the following words or phrases describe the Working Families Party?

Net: Describes Perfectly/Somewhat	All	Definitely DEM	Probably DEM	Undecided	Probably GOP
Fights for the Working Class	52%	56%	58%	37%	47%
For the Middle Class	50%	53%	56%	34%	34%
Common Sense	44%	48%	51%	31%	45%
Progressive	41%	45%	47%	22%	37%
Independent	33%	36%	34%	22%	33%
Moderate	31%	29%	37%	20%	35%
Woke	30%	33%	28%	19%	30%
Socialist	27%	29%	30%	16%	31%
Outsider	21%	18%	23%	15%	28%
Conservative	20%	17%	21%	15%	24%
Radical	19%	22%	25%	12%	23%
Anti-American	12%	12%	13%	6%	17%

Source: WFP Poll of 3,147 Democratic and Swing Voters
Table: October 7-12, 2022

Additionally, we asked voters to score themselves on a 0-10 ideological scale, with zero being most conservative, ten being most progressive and 5 being moderate, and also asked them to score WFP on an ideological scale. While progressives (self-described 8s-10s) saw WFP as progressive, the largest group in the survey were self-described 5s – almost a third of the total sample. Among self-described 5s, the majority rated WFP as a 5, matching WFP to themselves. The mean score given by self-described 5s for WFP on that 1-10 scale was 5.7. (Note that this question came *after* the defund battery.) Among those same self-identified moderates, the mean score for the Democratic Party was 6.7, suggesting that moderates see the WFP as closer to themselves ideologically than the Democratic Party. After hearing a few positive messages about the Working Families Party, perceptions of WFP ideologically shifted slightly more liberal, but self-identified moderates still viewed WFP as more moderate than the Democratic Party.

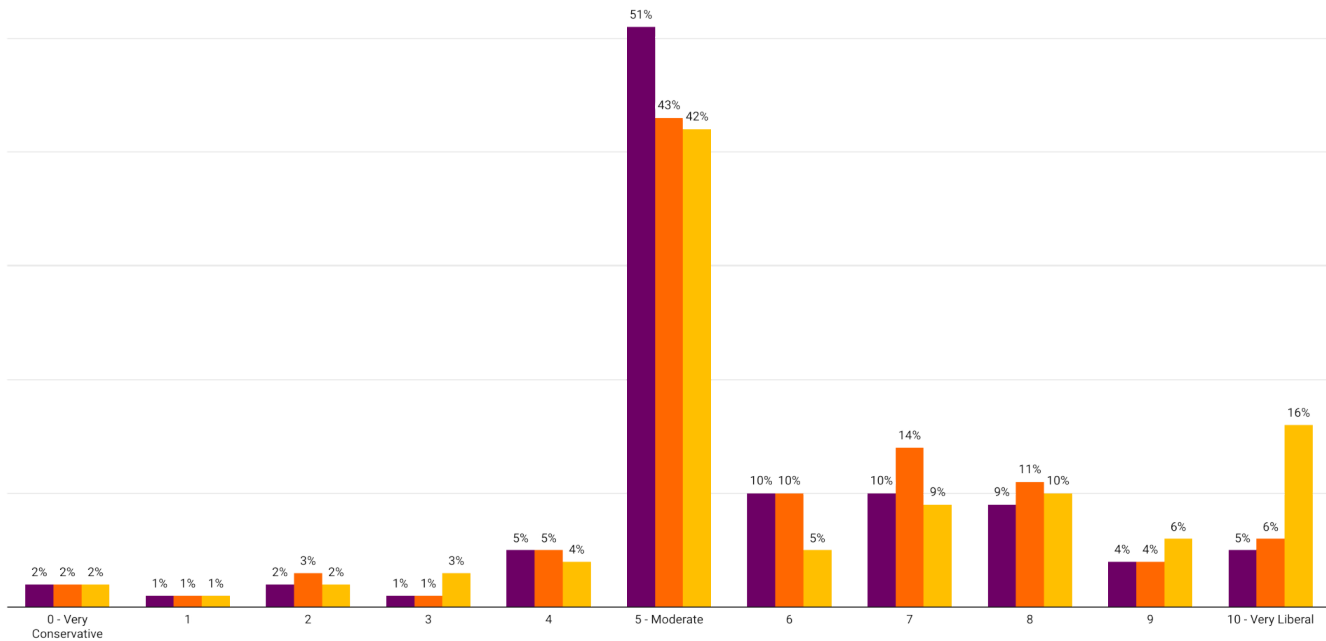
Placement on Political Spectrum (0= Conservative; 10=Liberal)

Mean Score (0-10)	Conservative	Lean Conservative	Moderate	Lean Liberal	Liberal
Democrats	3.9	6.9	6.3	7.0	7.7
WFP - Pre	3.8	5.9	5.7	6.4	7.2
WFP - Post	3.9	5.9	5.9	7.8	7.6

Source: WFP Poll of 3,147 Democratic and Swing Voters
Table: October 7-12, 2022

Placement on Political Spectrum of WFP and the Democratic Party among Self-Described Moderates

■ WFP Pre-Messaging ■ WFP Post-Messaging ■ Democratic Party



Source: WFP Poll of 1,152 Self-Described Moderates
Chart: October 7-12, 2022

4) The best messages about WFP resonate with Democrats as well as independent and probable Republican voters.

We tested three positive descriptions about WFP and asked if they would make voters more or less likely to vote for WFP endorsed candidates.

The three messages all show strength, but one message which describes WFP as an independent voice for working families, and most concerned with rising costs, performs the best among undecided, probable Democratic voters, and probable GOP voters.

Below is a statement about the Working Families Party. After reading the statement, please indicate if it makes you more likely to vote for a candidate that has been endorsed by the Working Families Party, Less Likely to Vote for a Candidate Endorsed by the Working Families Party, or if it makes no difference.

Net: More likely to vote for WFP-Endorsed Candidate	All	Definite DEM Voters	Probable DEM Voters	Undecided Voters	Probable GOP Voters
The Working Families Party is the independent voice for working families, fighting to bring down the cost of living and make the economy work for working people. We evaluate all the candidates and endorse only those who are committed to doing what's right for everyday families and not just the wealthy and well-connected. We fight for what matters most: good jobs and schools, the cost of housing and healthcare, and fair taxes.	66%	68%	80%	45%	59%
The Working Families Party is the party for the working class. Whether you're black, white or brown, newcomer or native-born, we all work hard to take care of our families and contribute to our communities. We deserve respect and leaders that will fight for us. But some politicians are teaming up with greedy corporations to drive up the cost of everything from groceries to housing, childcare and college – and they're attacking our basic freedoms like abortion rights too. The Working Families Party is regular people coming together to fight for a country that puts working people first.	66%	74%	70%	43%	50%
The Working Families Party is our voice, fighting for an America that works for all of us, not just the rich and powerful. We're building a movement to transform America, so we can win healthcare for all, racial justice, and a Green New Deal. We back the candidates who side with workers over greedy bosses and the people over the powerful, and will fight to make our nation realize the promise of freedom and equality for all.	62%	73%	68%	40%	35%

Source: WFP Poll of 3,147 Democratic and Swing Voters
Table: October 7-12, 2022

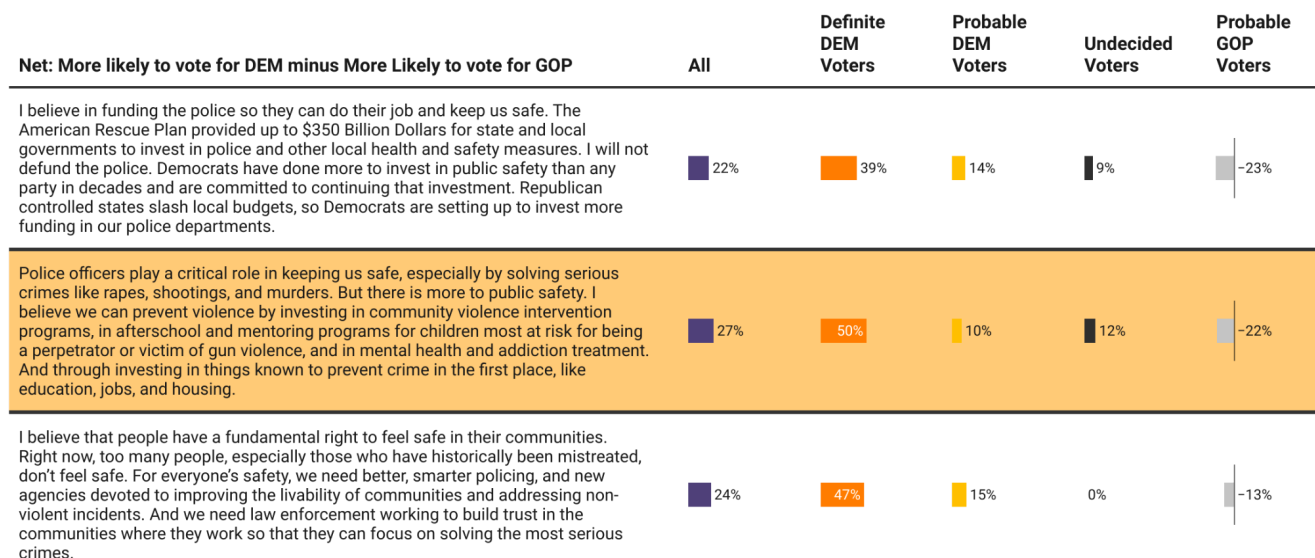
5) The best rebuttal for Democrats to Republican attacks on policing is not to mimic Republican calls to fund the police, but rather to include police as one part of a broader picture about what creates public safety.

Given the role that public safety and crime are playing as a major issue on voters' minds in this election, we explored the best Democratic responses to Republican attacks. While many Democratic candidates are responding by touting the ways in which Democrats have funded the police, our poll finds a more effective approach for Democratic candidates.

We tested a Republican 'defund' message split-test against three competing Democratic messages. The most effective message starts by acknowledging a role for police in "solving serious crimes" – which could help defuse "defund" attacks – and then argues for violence prevention and social investment as crucial elements of public safety as well.

That message stacks up best against the Republican message, among all voters in our sample, and among undecided and probable-Republican voters.

Below are two statements, one used by Republican candidates about crime and safety and the other used by Democratic candidates. After reading each statement, please indicate if the statements make you more likely to support a Republican candidate, more likely to support a Democratic candidate, or if they don't change your voting intention at all.

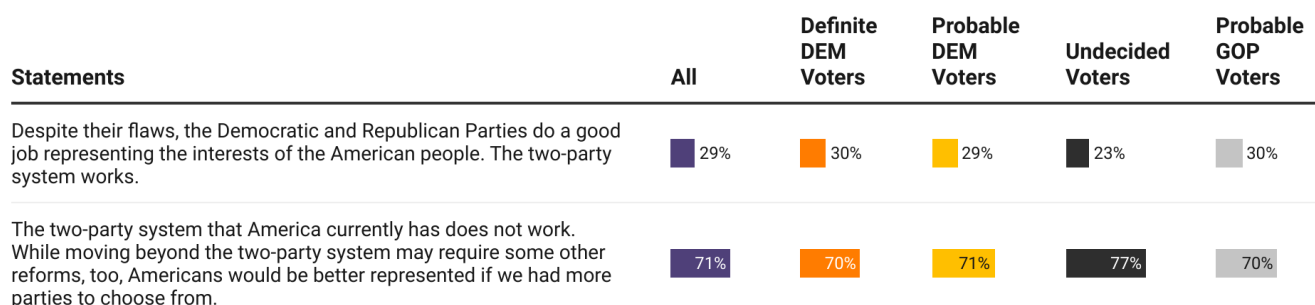


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Other Key Observations

In addition to the ballot message tests, we asked respondents about their attitudes towards the two-party system. We found that voters overwhelmingly believe we need more parties, even if it requires structural reforms to how we do elections. This was true even among voters who say they always vote for Democrats.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right?



Source: WFP Poll of 3,147 Democratic and Swing Voters
Table: October 7-12, 2022

Lastly, we gave undecided and Democratic-voting respondents a set of 23 possible priorities for Democrats if they maintain control of Congress, and asked them to choose five. Bringing down the cost of living ranked highest across the board. Guaranteeing health care for all ranks as the second highest priority, followed by codifying abortion rights. Undecided and probable Republican voters, however, are less likely to rank codifying abortion rights as a top priority, with increasing the supply of affordable housing rating as their third highest priority.

If Democrats keep control of Congress, what would you want to see them prioritize. Please choose up to five priorities. (asked only of Democratic and undecided voters)

Priority	All	Definite DEM Voters	Probable DEM Voters	Undecided Voters
Policies to bring down the cost of living	47%	44%	53%	49%
Guaranteed healthcare for all	39%	42%	35%	29%
Codifying abortion rights into law	29%	35%	26%	14%
Further policies to increase clean energy and reduce fossil fuel consumption	27%	33%	22%	13%
Increasing the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour	24%	26%	23%	20%
Repealing the Trump tax cuts for the wealthy and big corporations	23%	27%	21%	10%
Expanding social security and Medicare	22%	24%	21%	18%
Criminal justice reforms, including increasing police accountability	21%	21%	24%	18%
Increasing the supply of affordable housing	20%	20%	18%	23%
Protecting LGBTQ Americans	18%	20%	16%	13%
Paid family leave	17%	15%	21%	19%
Protecting the freedom to vote and the integrity of elections	16%	18%	13%	13%
Policies to support increasing manufacturing jobs in the U.S.	14%	12%	16%	19%
Universal child care and pre-K	14%	13%	14%	16%
Additional student debt cancellation	14%	13%	11%	21%
A Green New Deal	14%	15%	13%	9%
Instituting a wealth tax on large fortunes	13%	14%	12%	11%
Getting the border under control	12%	8%	17%	20%
Reinstating the monthly child tax credit	12%	10%	13%	15%
Investments in elder care and care workers	11%	10%	12%	12%

Additional 3 rows not shown.

Source: WFP Poll of 2,649 Democratic and Undecided Voters
Table: October 7-12, 2022